Left In Life's Best Bloom

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Left In Life's Best Bloom

by BewareTheIdes15

Summary

Why is there a bald teenager wearing Lex Luthor’s clothes lying in the middle of the parking lot?

Notes

Me: *shows up to the fandom 15 years late holding a Starbucks* Heyyyyyyy

So here's a thing that happened! This was supposed to be porn, but then it got gigantic and IDEK. It's been forever since I successfully wrote anything and then this poured out of me in 5 days thanks to Hulu and my deep, forever love of Michael Rosenbaum.

Set some time in the middle of season 2? Post-red, but pre-Helen? But then I looked up the ages and everything got a little wonky, so in MY universe, Clark and Lex were 16 and 22 respectively in S2, Helen doesn't exist, and anyone who has a problem with it can... have a problem with it. I'm not much of a fighter.

Also, I looked up the current age of consent in Kansas, and it's 16. I have no idea if that was accurate in 2002, but again, that's what I'm going with. Take it up with the state of Kansas.

Title is from To Thyrza by Lord Byron, while the poem quoted in the text is The Cornelian, also by Lord Byron. Any history-related notes contained herein were provided by the best resources the internet could provide and also my fancy pants liberal arts education. All those lit classes finally paying off.

- Translation into 中文-普通话 國語 available: Left In Life's Best Bloom | 芳华 by Please_Press_The_RT (Reynard_Tybert)

The crop dusting of lavender oil and acetone floating hazy on the air is nearly enough to drown out the red-pepper-and-aluminum smell of meteor rock that sticks, briar patch prickly, in his throat. Not concentrated enough to do more than hit him with some low-grade nausea, so score. Grit crackles between Clark's back teeth, flecks of brick and mortar kicked up when the back wall of the spa did it's Kool-Aid Man impression.

It's possible that using heat vision on Ms. Alpert's latest glowing green "anti-aging miracle serum" was not the outstanding idea Clark had originally thought. In fairness, he'd been under a little stress at the time, what with Lex…

Lex.

Vaulting over the pile of rubble blocking the new, unplanned window onto the parking lot, Clark catches the sound of Ms. Alpert groaning quietly but a quick scan with his x-ray vision shows nothing worse than a fractured femur (this really wasn't how Clark saw himself studying for anatomy) so he leaves her where she's slumped behind a cabinet full of leg wax.

On the other side of the building, he can hear people spilling out into the street to investigate, which means he hasn't got a lot of time to get this show on the road before the police show up and start asking difficult questions like *why was Clark hanging around a condemned spa in the middle of the afternoon? How come Clark always seems to be around when things blow up?*

Why is there a bald teenager wearing Lex Luthor's clothes lying in the middle of the parking lot?

"Oh, kudos to the chemist," the kid says, blinking dazed grey eyes up at the sky. "-10 for the explosion, but A+ mix."

Voice slightly higher, clipped sharp around the ends and smudgy toward the middle in a way that flashes "European Boarding School," like a neon sign, but that inflection sounds exactly like...

"Lex?"

Spring-loaded, the kid sits up, way more with the here and now than he looked three seconds ago. At a guess he's maybe Clark's age; a little more puppy fat around the cheeks, slightly softer in the jaw, skinny through the neck and across the sharp jut of a clavicle peeking out of

the cockeyed collar of his shirt. The scar is there on his lip, though, and the graphite-shadow smirk nestled into the corner of his mouth could be Lex's business card.

"Hi." His eyes trip an inventory down Clark's body, and wow, okay, still all Lex but not the kind of look that Lex usually aims Clark's direction. Not the kind of look Lex usually aims in the direction of anybody with less than three pristine miles of leg and a fantastic set of breasts. Not that Clark's been paying attention, or anything. "I apologize, I seem to have blacked out and tragically misplaced your name."

The same long fingers Clark's watched wield fencing foils, and pool cues, and pens with equal precision reach out, attached to a slim, almost dainty wrist. Lex's watch sags disconsolately from it, a hangdog lump of silver that looks like it ought to drag his whole arm down.

Nothing else to do for it, Clark carefully helps hoist… *Lex* to his feet.

He's not much shorter than full-grown Lex, but the dust-smudged remodel of what was once probably an insanely expensive business shirt flops a little over the shoulders, and his belt sags to latitudes bordering dangerous and obscene.

"Clark," he introduces himself awkwardly, just sort of hovering there, too close for politeness, when Lex totally spaces on the letting go of his hand part of the equation. "Um, Clark Kent."

"Clark Kent." It's almost nice to know that Lex has always made normal words sound confusingly sexual. Weird, but almost nice. "Alliterative, gorgeous, and arriving right in my hour of need. You're straight out of a comic book, aren't you."

Something blazing hot drops in, using Clark's stomach for a skateboard ramp before wiping out spectacularly against the walls of his rib cage.

"Says the genius billionaire."

The laugh that bursts out of Lex is loud and a little bit goofy, definitely not the standard approved-for-press-junkets model. The hand he plants in the middle of Clark's chest is… something else altogether.

"Fair," Lex grins, full-stop, fingers curling against Clark's t-shirt. And then, well. Okay. Clark can't think of word for it besides "purr," and

the way Lex kind of sidles up close - all body heat and exquisite cologne under the smoldering chemical stink of burnt plastic - and rubs against him isn't helping. So yeah, Lex *purrs* , "Tell me we haven't hooked up yet. If I've gotten a taste of all this and forgotten it I may have to do something dire."

And Clark just fails. At everything, up to and including, like, breathing. Because Lex is… *Teenage* Lex is… Coming on to him? Maybe? Like, what else could that be? But also, *Lex* . Lex dates supermodels, and Fortune 500 CEOs, and - really integral factor here - women. Adult women. Women whose brains almost definitely do not snap-crackle-pop in the basin of their skull as they stare, gape-mouthed, at Lex feeling up their chest.

Can the meteor rocks make you gay? Bi? Usually the rocks are only good for one life-shattering change at a time, and with the whole de-aging thing...

Admittedly, the red stuff did inspire a few not entirely heterosexual impulses in Clark that one time, but he's not exactly the floor model to base meteorite reactions off of. Plus, he'd decided not to think about that for the rest of forever. Being an alien's more than enough identity issues for one lifetime.

Besides, getting hot for Lex barely even counts as queer-ish. Like, he's a person, he has eyes; wanting to do the horizontal shimmy with Lex is just a sign of good taste.

Of course, Lex has tossed out a few gender-ambiguous stories starring what Clark might generously call exes. And Raul. Lex calls him a masseur, but he wears very tight pants and he always comes out of their "sessions" suspiciously sweaty...

Hot knife through butter, the sound of a siren slices through Clark's thoughts and keeps going, right down to the nervy core where Clark's instincts spend a solid 80% of their time shouting *RUN!*

Now that he's listening for it, there are self-appointed rescuers in the spa too, trying to moutaineer their way into the back. There's enough debris blocking the door to keep them out for the moment, but that is not going to cut it much longer. At which point explaining Lex's glowing, youthful complexion is going to become the kind of problem that will attract every newspaper from here to Metropolis.

"Lex, we really need to get you... somewhere else." Glancing around the parking lot for Lex's BMW - and not in any way paying attention

to how Lex's short nails scrape at his chest when he breathes - Clark spots the silver tail end of it parked a couple of spaces off to the side of a big rusted out dumpster, largely spared from the collateral damage of Clark's impromptu fireworks. "Do you have your keys?"

"A fine plan." Oh, good, Lex is still purring, that's not uncomfortable at all. He is, however, also digging through the pockets of the slacks that look about five seconds from falling right off of him - not that it seems like he'd mind - and fishing out a glinting key fob. "And yes, lucky me."

There's negative-four resistance in him when Clark snatches the keys and starts towing him across the parking lot, seriously debating the merits of superspeeding and blaming it on Lex hitting his head again or something. For somebody who basically walks around in their own personal spotlight, Lex is surprisingly stealthy. Maybe that misspent youth he's always hinting at involved a lot of quick getaways.

"Out of curiosity," Lex muses, pouring himself gracefully into the passenger seat, "Where exactly are we?"

Now is not the moment to revel in how smoothly the BMW's engine turns over, the faint hum over power and supple leather against Clark's palms. A later moment, for sure. He has got to get Lex to let him drive this again some time.

"Uh, Smallville."

Out of the corner of his eye he'd swear he caught slim fingers tightening over the door handle. By the time Clark finishes pulling out onto the side street and navigating them around the knot of traffic where people are poking their heads out of their cars to look in the direction of the spa Lex is back to normal, though. Or, well, he's still a teenager, but he's rocking the patented *What is this "care" you speak of* look, so that's something.

"Jesus. Alright, I have got to find out what I was on, because I need more of it immediately," Lex mutters, hands busy disassembling the knot of his crumpled tie.

Which is the moment it occurs to Clark that as freakalicious as this is for him, for Lex this day has consisted of: waking up in a parking lot surrounded by body lotion and brick shrapnel with no memory of how he got there or what's happening, hitting on a guy he's never met before, handing over his car to said guy and driving off with him to an undisclosed location, all, presumably, while either on or having

recently come off of some kind of drug he doesn't remember taking.

Clark's previous, long-standing concerns about Lex's self-preservation instincts? Validated.

"Does this… does this happen to you a lot?"

He has to raise his voice, since Lex chooses that exact moment to roll down the side window, holding the tie out and watching it writhe like a plum windsock for a few seconds before releasing it to flutter away behind them.

"Almost never, actually. I have a very high tolerance." He says it like an accomplishment, only with more zeal than Clark's ever seen him show for any of his actual accomplishments.

"You're just taking it really well."

"Always do." Back to purring, with a hand traipsing across the back of Clark's on the gearshift as a backup dancer. "Take it well, I mean."

Okay, what the actual heck was Lex being allowed to do in high school? Obviously his dad was a write-off, but surely there should have been somebody looking out for him. A teacher, or a bodyguard, or *someone* to teach him that unexpectedly waking up in the town where he has a history of major trauma and running off with strangers who want to do God knows what to him are not a-okay things to just skip down the lane with. Clark wasn't even allowed to cross the street by himself until he was ten and he's freaking invulnerable.

"You're really struggling with this innuendo." Lex's pants hiss against leather upholstery as he shifts, half turned in the seat to face Clark. The searching look is far more familiar. "Are you straight? Because I can work around that."

One day, Clark's going to have to tell Lex how close they both came to an inglorious death in a cow pasture because *take it.* Oh my god.

Or better yet, never ever speak of it again. Ever.

"Jeez, Lex!" Clark chooses to ignore that his face is currently one billion degrees in favor of surreptitiously wiping the film of sweat on his palms off on the leg of his jeans. Stupid, supple, sweat-inducing leather. "Could you think with your upstairs head for a minute?"

The sigh Lex huffs through his nose is violently adolescent. Seriously,

he's making Clark feel old. "Dull."

For all of a gloriously uneventful ten seconds he busies himself with staring out the window, before that perpetual restless energy gets the best of him and he starts fiddling with the overlong cuffs of his shirt. Up they go, over the whipcord length of Lex's forearms; less muscular than Clark's become accustomed to, but not exactly puny, either. Lean. Like his chest, which is suddenly much more visible now that Lex has undone the top three buttons of his shirt and, wow, watching the road is a good thing.

Such a good thing.

Look at all that road.

"So Clark Kent. Of Smallville, I assume?" The passenger seat clunks as Lex leans it back farther than any car seat could reasonably need to go and arches in the slice of late afternoon sunlight. "You're obviously not Metropolis stock, and if I brought a rental all the way out here I'd expect more creative nudity."

"Ren-" Somewhere between the words forming in his brain and hitting the landing strip of his tongue, Clark catches up to how very much he does not want to hear any of the possible answers to this question. Really, though, *rental* ? "Nevermind."

But Lex has got that grin pasted on again, the one that's really not smug and controlled and Lexian except for how it completely is. "Would you prefer prostitute?"

Forget a billion, they're going to have to come up with new numbers to describe the temperature of Clark's face. A whole new temperature scale even. Something above Kelvins. Is there anything above Kelvins? Lex would know, except right now he'd probably just use it as an excuse to call Clark hot again.

Today is the weirdest day.

Of this week, anyway. Probably even the month.

"Oh, you're *so* from Smallville," Lex enthuses, 100% teeth. "How did we meet?"

It's a split-second decision when Clark veers off of the main road onto the little lane that will wind them down toward the farm. Unfriendly gravel pings against the undercarriage, a steady patter that makes

Clark want to get out and carry the BMW instead.

“You, uh. You almost ran me over with your car.”

Lex slithers over onto his side, snake-lithe. At this point, his shirt’s really more of a suggestion than an actual body covering, slipping off the knob of one shoulder, perilously close to exposing a nipple. Not that Clark would care, of course. Aside from the fact that Lex is lounging over there like the femme fatale in some detective movie which isn’t the kind of thing someone with his build should be able to pull off. It’s kind of impressive.

“Eventful day. Have I apologized properly yet? I’m willing to get down on my knees and beg.”

Yep, it’s official, today is not happening. Today is an inexplicable dream. Today has been rescheduled to a time more suited to the forces of logic and rationality.

Honestly, was no one involved in the raising of this child?

“What did I just say about the upstairs head?”

Lex giggles. Totally straight-up giggles, and it’s going to be at least, like, 30 years before Clark will even consider letting Lex live it down.

If today had ever happened. Which it didn’t and it isn’t. The end.

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Okay, not the end.

What to do with Lex is a shiny new problem that he can’t help but feel adult Lex would have some high quality advice on. He can’t take him to the manor, that much is clear. By all accounts, Lionel has stopped trying to bug the place, but there’s still the staff. Even if none of them reported it in to Mr. Luthor, or a tabloid, they’d still be answering to an obviously underaged version of Lex, and Lex? Not exactly with the state of the art decisions right now. Clark doesn’t really think most of the folks working at the manor would try and take advantage, but then again, Lex attracts America’s Most Wanted like moths to a flame. Only somehow Lex is always the one getting burned.

Clark could just tell him the full story, he guesses, minus a few key extraterrestrial details. By now Lex is well versed in the degrees of freaky a liberal sprinkling of meteor rock can produce, so it's not like he'd be giving anything away in the long run. Assuming Lex even remembers all of this when his age dial gets turned back up. Assuming Clark can figure out how to do that.

But how do you tell somebody that, not only are they living in the future, but that their future involves their dad forcing them to move to the town where the worst day of their life happened (and where basically everybody hates them, beeteedubs) so they can run a fertilizer plant? Clark averages a B- in Literature and even he can grasp that symbolism. He's got no clue what Lex was imagining for his life when he was sixteen, but it doesn't seem real far out on a limb to say this wasn't it.

As for turning him back, there's not exactly a standard protocol, and it's becoming dishearteningly clear how big of an oversight that is. Some of the meteor freaks he's tangled with have gotten treatment, but for them it's really just fighting the symptoms of whatever's going sideways in their bodies. There's no cure for being too young except aging, as far as Clark knows, and man, if there haven't been days he's wished otherwise.

He could try using his heat vision on more meteor rock, but he's not entirely sure what else was in that serum Ms. Alpert was cooking up, or whether any of it would make a difference.

Also, kaboom.

God, he really doesn't need to accidentally baby-fy Lex.

Mostly Clark figures he's just lucky Mom and Dad are at the cattle auction this weekend. Still, stashing Lex in the barn is, at best, a short-term solution.

Miniature-term, maybe, considering the imperial look Lex casts over the loft as they hit the top of the stairs.

"Homey," Lex pronounces, conspicuously dodging physical contact with the bannister.

"It's just until we figure out…" Clark breaks off, watching Lex nudge at the corner of the sofa with the shiny toe of one shoe. "Listen, Lex. This is hard to explain."

Bending at the waist to scan the papers spilled across Clark's makeshift coffee table, Lex mumbles, "Feel free to start trying any time now."

"You saw that there was… an accident."

"The explosion," Lex agrees, moving on to the bookshelf. One finger ambles down the line of peeling paperback spines. "Was I responsible?"

A lone leather-bound copy comes away in his hand, rich maroon as mismatched to the rest of Clark's second-hand collection as the day Lex gave it to him. Gold-edged pages riffle against Lex's fingertips as he flips through it, nonchalant.

Caught up between the impulse to stomp over there and make Lex listen and the urge to slip it in unseen between the cracks of the conversation where Lex might not notice it, Clark ends up just shuffling like a scolded third-grader. Yeah, there's the authoritative imagery he was looking for.

"No. You just have a knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

" *But he, who seeks the flowers of truth, Must quit the garden, for the field.* Byron wrote this for a chiorboy he fell in love with when he was in college. Actually, he wrote a number of poems for him, using the female name Thyrza." The book claps shut in Lex's grip. "He died young. The chiorboy. Though Byron too, in point of fact. 36, three years older than Alexander. And Jesus. No empire, but it does seem like he had more fun."

With proprietary care, Lex slips the book back into its empty space on the shelf, making the adjacent Pre-AP English copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* look shabbier by comparison. One last affectionate stroke and Lex turns around, leaning against the shelves like he's expecting a photographer to pop out of the rafters any second.

"We didn't just meet today."

It's not an accusation, not any more of one than when he says *how did you do that, Clark?* The politely rhetorical kind that they've both silently agreed to ignore. Only apparently this Lex isn't in on that arrangement because he's just standing there like he was cast in bronze, waiting on Clark to say something.

“No,” Clark admits.

The fizzling kernel of *you screwed up* that burrowed a home for itself in the center of his chest somewhere around the time his dad sat him down and had that first talk about he couldn’t be like other kids after he pushed Jesse Turnbaum on the swings sends off a red flare of heat that makes his ribcage feel like it shrunk in the wash.

“So, what? I have amnesia?”

“You could say that.”

Lex’s fingertips skate restlessly along the wooden frame of the shelf, nails catching at a join in the wood and picking restlessly. The sort of advertisement of his inner state that full grown Lex would never allow himself.

“How long have we known each other?”

“Uh, we met about a year ago. We’re- we’re friends.”

“Friends.” That, at least, gets a reaction. Admittedly it’s a scoff, brittle and sharp-edged enough to cut. “You’re young, so I understand that you might not be aware of this, but my father’s not going to pay a ransom. He’ll just send somebody to track me down and then ruin your future prospects. If you’re lucky.”

“I didn’t kidnap you!”

The smile that creeps its way across Lex’s face is feather-soft, bitter; the most Lex-like he’s looked all day and if that doesn’t define painfully depressing, Clark’s not sure what does.

“It’s perfectly alright, Clark. I’ve certainly had less appealing abductions.”

Quasi-bored, he meanders over to the telescope, leaning down to glance through the eyepiece with an approving noise. The light refracting back through the lens illuminates his eye to an eerie sky blue.

Come on, Clark, think. He knows, well, not everything about Lex. He doubts Lex knows everything about Lex. But he’s a Rhodes Scholar compared to most people. Things the average person couldn’t guess.

Like, what? Lex’s bottled water obsession? That he won’t allow

yellow-toned artwork in the castle because yellow washes him out? How aggressively creepy his dad is?

“I… You’re… uh, your watch! It’s a Napoleon, um,” No, but seriously, *come on Clark* . “A Napoleon coin. Your mom had it made into a watch face, she gave it to you before she died.”

Fantastic. Lex has stopped breathing.

“And, and Napoleon had his mom painted into his coronation painting even though she couldn’t really be there, to... um, to share in his greatness?”

There’s an infinitesimal chance that Clark could have kept the end in the same octave as the rest, but he’s not ready to put money down on it. Any which way, it’s got Lex’s eyes moving over him like a pinball going for the high score.

That little kernel has turned into a soldering iron, scratching out mean little designs across the surface of his lungs.

What the heck is he going to do if Lex decides to walk out? There’s only so many places to lock him up, and the second he does he can kiss any scrap of good will Lex might have had for him goodbye. That’s assuming he could do it at all without revealing any of his powers, which, yeah, Bad idea.

“You couldn’t be my father’s get,” Lex says finally. “He wouldn’t allow *this* ,” dismissing the whole barn with one flip of his hand.

And there’s a mental image to inspire nightmares. Lionel Luthor as *his dad* .

“No! Oh my God, no. I’m not, no. Why would-”

Lex is not in a caring and sharing mood, though. Lex is in full-blown boardroom predator mode, scary-smart brain gathering up all of the shook up pieces and reassembling them without even knowing what he’s putting together.

“So, we’ve known each other for a year. We’re... close,” he says it like a capitulation. “But I’m not sleeping with you.”

Two decisive steps bring him away from the window, two more right back into Clark’s personal space, orbiting in a slow, narrow-eyed circle. “You brought me to your home, not to my father or a hospital,

so you're not on his payroll. What's your angle?"

For the first time all afternoon, Lex looks irritated. The sunset kisses orange along the shell of his ear, throws origami shadows over the hollows of his face that make it impossible to tell whether that's at Clark for being secretive or at himself for not ferreting out some hidden agenda.

"My- nothing. I mean, I'm not-" Clark stumbles. Doesn't even realize he's backing up until he nearly takes a header down the stairs. "I'm just your friend, Lex. I'm just, just trying to help you. Because I like you."

Whatever Lex was expecting him to say, it clearly wasn't that. He sort of judders, like a video tape that's been paused too many times in the same spot. Kicks back into gear like maybe Clark didn't notice it, and Clark takes a second to be pissed off about this brilliant, desperate kid he never met. How much different could Lex have turned out if there'd been one single person in his entire life taking care of him? Beating the crap out of a bunch of people in the past isn't a feasible option now - not that he's not holding out hope at getting a shot at Mr. Luthor one day - so Clark will have to settle for being that person for this Lex. For however long this lasts.

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Naturally, Lex has a lot of questions. Not the pointed, laser-focus sort of questions Clark would have expected, but broad things. Where he lives, if he's stuck under his dad's thumb, if there are any decent clubs within driving distance. Like he doesn't care about the details, or just doesn't want to know.

As always, Lex picks up threads, draws his own conclusions. Makes it easy for Clark to lie without lying and still doesn't seem to quite believe him.

So that's not something he just grew into.

They hash it out mowing through leftovers Clark scavenged from the fridge, licking the grease from cold fried chicken off their fingers over cherry-picked bits of history Clark thinks won't give too much away.

“Okay, so,” Lex takes a swig from a can of Coke he keeps not-remotely-subtly hinting would be better with rum. “Have I ever given you something you actually kept?”

He’s not coping well with the news about the truck. Or the concert tickets. Or the couple dozen other things that Lex has tried to, in Dad’s words, “buy Clark’s friendship with.” Surprise surprise.

Scrubbing his hands on the knees of his jeans and then immediately trying to brush away the oily stains, Clark replies, “Sure, lots of stuff.”

“Such as?”

Clark casts a look around. Okay, so, he’s returned a lot of Lex’s stuff. It’s not like he wanted to!

“Um, that poetry book,” he settles on, thirty seconds too late to sound convincing.

Lex is an incredibly eloquent blinker. Like, really, whole paragraphs were jammed in between the lashes of that blink.

“Forgive me,” Sahara-dry, “I’m overwhelmed. How could I have overlooked a $200 Byronic anthology?”

Syrupy soda splashes like a burst paintball as Clark’s fingers punch right through the sides of the can he obviously picked up at just the wrong time.

“$200! For a book?”

He flicks the soda off of his fingers, crushing the can into an unincriminating ball before stripping off his overshirt to sop up the spill. His homework had gotten shuffled over to the desk earlier so the damage is pretty minimal. Going to have to rinse off the trunk, or the ants will move in again and Mom-

“I’m totally obsessed with you, aren’t I?”

Down on his knees in front of the couch, Clark pauses, feeling suddenly naked with just a worn out t-shirt between him and Lex’s carnivore eyes. “What?”

“You’re beautiful, you refuse gifts, you *like me* .” There’s something about the way he says it that sounds mocking, but Clark gets the impression that’s not directed at him. “How could I not be obsessed

with that?"

One slender, bare foot tucks up onto the sofa cushions, Lex's chin hooking over his knee. Like a dancer on their off-day, or a life studies model in an art class; offhandedly graceful, intrinsically eye-catching. Made to be watched, or maybe forced to be, and he's grown himself around it like that old tree down by the graveyard that's got a fence right through the middle of it, the wood warped into shape to make room.

"It's why I haven't made a move on you before," Les says like a certainty. "I'm afraid of ruining it."

"Has anyone ever told you you get really fixated?" Clark's aiming for a laugh and misses by a country mile. Winds up sort of huffing as the sticky-damp cotton of his overshirt grabs at his fingers, clinging as he compacts it into an increasingly tiny ball between his hands.

Totally unperturbed, Lex shrugs, "Did you miss when I said obsessed?"

Subtle as a porno, one fingertip trace over the bow of Lex's upper lip, pink tongue trailing along behind like he's yearning for the salt of his own skin. Effective as a porno too, so, you know, there's that.

More effective, even, because this isn't some grainy bootleg image jolting along his laptop screen in the dead of night. This is Lex, who's probably done stuff in bed that Clark doesn't even know exists, three feet away and ready to be touched. Begging to be touched, with his shirt halfway undone, pants barely hanging on, flushed over his chest and high on his cheeks like Clark's never seen before. An invitation to test if that skin's as warm as he's imagining.

See, these are not acceptable best friend thoughts.

"It wouldn't ruin it, though, would it, Clark?" Lex asks. Doesn't wait for an answer before adding, "What guy doesn't want his dick sucked?"

There's a tearing sound that Clark couldn't identify if his shot at graduating was riding on it. Not til Lex slants a look at Clark's hands and, oh, right. Shirt. Well, Mom says they can always use more dishrags.

Like he's on a mission to eradicate Clark's brain cells and he's going to succeed or die trying, Lex says, "I'm good at it," all 900-number commercial sultry. Totally put on and exactly no less compelling for it.

“I could make you crave it. I could do things for you that nobody else could. I’d give you anything, Clark.”

His leg’s not so much bracing now as it is spreading, tipping outward so Clark’s gaze has not choice but to slip-and-slide down the angle of his thigh and splash down right at his crotch.

“Lex, I don’t know what kind of people you grew up with. Or, I mean, I kind of do,” Clark stammers. His ruined flannel is doing a probably mediocre job of hiding how convincing his dick finds Lex’s argument, but hey, he’s a teenager, he’s supposed to be easy, right? That’s not, like… It’s not a big deal or anything. “What I mean is, you don’t need to- *do things* to make me care about you.”

Do things. Awesome. Clark is the king of mature conversations.

One articulate eyebrow is all Lex spares for that. “Are you saying you’d care about me less if I made you come so hard you forgot your own name?”

Not best friend thoughts at all.

“You- We’re best friends,” Clark says, somewhere around the frantic-hysterical county line. “You’re one of the most important people in my life.”

Clark has been breathing for literally his entire life, there’s no reason for it to have gotten this hard all of a sudden. And there’s a double entendre for you. Lex would totally appreciate that if it weren’t for how spectacularly terrible an idea it would be to say any of that out loud.

“I suppose the odds of getting a ranked list are low.” Evidently they issued the ability to sound casual while looking like he wants to murder someone to Lex right along with his driver's licence going by the arctic glance he throws toward the telescope. “How about where I stack up against her?”

Lana had come up in a couple of stories and Lex had gotten… hostile’s a good word. Clark’s not really sure why; grown-up Lex perfectly content to ignore her existence beyond helping Clark make something happen there, but yeah, definitely hostile. Like, planning ways to make her disappear kind of hostile which is one more thing Clark so does not need on his plate right now.

“It’s not a contest, Lex.”

“Everything’s a contest. The people who don’t think so are losing.”

See that? A perfect intro to the meandering sort of philosophical conversation that Lex excels at, and Clark would totally encourage it if Lex wasn’t slinking off the couch all smooth and boneless-like so that he and Clark are kneeling almost eye to eye.

“Is it the girl thing?” Lex’s voice is soft, hot like the hand that finds its way to Clark’s hip, burning at him like there’s no clothes between them at all. Yet another place his mind seriously needs to not be right now. “Because I happen to look fantastic in a miniskirt.”

That’s a… that’s a strange thought. Very, um, unexpected.

And so not an appropriate moment to realize that he’s never seen Lex’s legs before. They’re bound to be nice, right? Lex is very well put together, and he moves like somebody who knows how to work that; that walk that makes you think about sex even when you don’t mean to, to say nothing of the bending over, that goddamn pool table, and one way or another he’s wandered off the path into the having sex with Lex on a pool table place and that was just a dream, okay? Just that one time! Dreams don’t have to mean anything!

“I… uh…”

When did Lex get so much closer? Close enough to sort of *moan* into Clark’s ear, warm and damp, and yep, that’s a tongue.

“Yeah? What else? Heels? Thigh-highs?” Lex’s lips glide slick against his earlobe, grinning, tugging like that’s the secret lever to make Clark go molten inside his skin. Turns out, it is. “Would you like to see me in panties, Clark? Something lacy you could peel off with your teeth.”

He nips, hard, at the tender spot right behind Clark’s jaw. Not enough to hurt, not to hurt Clark anyway, but just the intent is enough to make it count, like his body can’t remember the difference between what’s real and what Lex means.

Sneaky fingertips have slipped under the hem of Clark’s shirt, fanning out in a slow splay over the flat of his belly so that Clark can’t help but be aware of how he, like, has skin. Just, really a lot of it, and how very little of it Lex is touching.

“You don’t even know me,” last-ditch shivery, and the shirt he was holding is somewhere in this plane of existence, he’s sure, and he’ll remember why he cares about that some year.

“I could.” Little kiss against the corner of his mouth. Chaste, only not at all. Not even in the same zip code as chaste with nothing but Lex breathing against his mouth, humid and cola-sweet when Clark can’t resist the urge to lick his lips and ends up wetting Lex’s right along with them. “I want you.”

The vulnerability in it; a bald-faced statement, no hedging, no layer cake intent. Not a Lex who’s learned that wanting something is a reason for people to take it away, who’s been taught that showing someone where your heart is just gives them directions to cutting it out. How long has it been since Lex was this open with somebody? What happened that burned that out of him?

Did Clark ever really have a shot at saying no to this?

There are a couple of wet concrete seconds where everything feels still. Just Clark’s mouth pressed against Lex’s, the silk heat of a first kiss. Then Lex’s lips slip apart and a groan pours out straight onto Clark’s tongue, slingshotting them right past sweet and into the filthy kind of making out they won’t show on network tv.

Lex’s hands are everywhere, pressing deep enough to bruise a human like he thinks he’s got to claim the acreage, plant his flag in the name of Luthor, only really, he’d be planting it in the name of Lex because, all cards on the table here, Lex doesn’t share, with Luthors least of all. Spilling all of these choppy, happy noises like wet paint, sloshing and staining every inch of skin they touch. Lots of skin. More, when he pulls back far enough to shove Clark’s t-shirt up and off. Pressing in closer until personal space isn’t even an idea, the whole concept lit on fire and thrown out the barn window to dance on the breeze.

He’s way more flexible than Clark would have bet, not to mention efficient at getting out of his own clothes and, okay, Lex doesn’t wear underwear under his suits. That’s a thing Clark’s going to know for the rest of his life.

In other news, Lex’s dick. It’s very… Clark’s not even sure what the right words are for describing a dick. Pretty seems insulting somehow; unmanly, and there’s really nothing unmanly about… that. Even if it is surprisingly pink. And smooth. Lex really is hairless all over and it’s not like that’s a thing Clark’s devoted serious thought to so he’s drastically unprepared for how that makes him want to run his mouth all over and see where Lex is softest.

Lex licks the words, “Have you ever?” into his mouth, near inaudible

over the slow sucking bite he takes of Clark's bottom lip.

And that's Lex's… cock. Erection? Nope, weird, definitely cock. All hard and, like, *hard* . For *Clark* . Pressing against Clark's through his pants like it's asking him to come out and play.

Why does he even own pants? New rule, no pants, ever.

"Almost. Once," Clark chokes out around a mouthful of empty air when Lex kind of *rolls* his hip like he just doesn't give a damn that's not how spines work. Breathing's overrated anyway.

"With a guy?"

It's all Clark can do to shake his head and try to maintain his fingernail grip on sanity because Lex's hand. In his pants. Sweet sparkly Easter Bunny.

"Good." The faint one-day stubble on his chin - his mom's out of town, okay? He doesn't have to shave if he doesn't feel like it - whispers like sandpaper against the slow swipe of Lex's tongue. "You never forget your first."

And Clark? He's stronger than your average bear. Literally, bear's have got nothing on him , and yet he still topples cardboard-cutout quick when Lex shoves at his chest. Hits the floor like gravity's a surprise and just lays there, dumbstruck, as Lex undoes his fly with a frankly insulting level of acumen and shucks Clark's jeans right down to the knee.

"Fuck," Lex breathes, churchhouse reverent, hands skating up Clark's thighs until his thumbs nestle into the crease on either side of his balls. "It's like I made you up. If, by chance, this is all an elaborate hallucination, feel free not to wake me."

Or possibly he says something else entirely. For all Clark knows he's speaking Spanish, or Mandarin, or whatever the language is on the planet where Clark was born, because Lex is also reaching out and gripping Clark's dick for a slow, teasing stroke that makes Clark's higher brain functions roll over and show their bellies.

Gooey-sweet bliss crawls up Clark's veins, hot and thought-demolishing as Lex jacks him again, letting the skin slide up at the same he leans forward and purses his lips against the tip. Keeps them there until the foreskin kisses against him, dirty and soft with the slick head caught up in the middle.

“Oh God,” Clark chokes, the velvet rasp of Lex’s tongue slipping under the foreskin setting off a shiver that zips straight to the top of his head and bounces back on itself until his whole body is one giant cascade of tremors.

Lex smears another smile along the shaft, leaving shiny streaks across his cheeks and down his chin. Precise, controlled Lex, in mess, just for Clark.

“Just getting started.”

His mouth is hot, so much warmer than his skin when Clark presses a tentative touch to the back of his neck. That’s okay, isn’t it? Or is that pushy? He doesn’t want to be pushy. But, man, he needs to touch something, something real. The boot-worn boards under his back feel like mist, like floating with only the jet-engine swelter of the places he and Lex connect for an anchor point.

Only Lex goes down like Clark’s shoving him, anyway, even though he’s being so careful. So careful, so breakable, Lex’s thin skin and fragile bones that have nothing on the steel at his foundations. Pressing himself until his throat makes this wet clicking noise that’s hooked directly into the animal part of Clark’s brain. Slow pull coming back up, just long enough to moan and suck hard at the head and it’s like he strung an electric fence up the length of Clark’s spine. Like Eric and the lightning, and honestly, if Lex is sapping his powers right now, he’s freaking earned them.

Porcelaine-slick teeth drag over his slit, glossy with spit and clinging precome until Lex licks them clean, salacious as a strip tease.

“You like it rough?” Lex’s voice is too smoky for Clark to think past the sound of it, even if he wasn’t still rubbing his mouth against the tip in some kind of XXX parody of putting on lipstick. “Or do you just not mind it?”

A half dozen answers flitter over the surface of Clark’s mind, dragged down the road miles behind the sandpaper grate of Lex’s neat, even teeth biting softly down the length of his cock.

Probably softly. Hell, like Clark’s got a freaking clue. Like he even cares as long as Lex doesn’t stop.

“I, uh.” Flashback to Lex watching corn fields flash by out the car window, lit up like Christmas. “I have a high tolerance?”

True story, Lex doesn't grin enough as an adult. They've got to work on that.

The delighted little curve of it gets blotted out of shape against the inside of Clark's thigh, luxuriously slow kiss tongued to the pale stretch of skin before Lex mumbles, "Well there's something to explore later," and bites down.

Hard.

Very hard, Clark is guessing, and he has a flickering tenth of a second to worry about Lex's teeth before that gets wiped off the freaking map by the sputtering sparks his nerves are firing off every which way - dick twitching, making a mortifying splat noise as it slaps back to the puddle of precome gathering on his belly, nipples pulled tight and hard and he's really never paid all that much attention to them before but man it's good to skate a hand across his chest and feel the sort of warm-edged ache of them flare bright. This has been such an educational day.

And Lex must not be having major dental issues because there's a pair of ravenous eyes peering up at him over the ridge of his hip that promise "exploring" is something that will absolutely be happening. Clark is going to worry about it then.

"In the meantime..." Oh yep, totally worrying about it then, because now is for Lex licking his balls, molasses slow and, like, *thorough* . Jeez that's nice. That should really… that needs to happen way more often. Like daily. Hourly, if possible. "Tell me how to make you feel good."

What are the chances of de-aging being contagious, because the high, squeaky voice that Clark grew out of about three years ago makes a miraculous reappearance to say, "This works."

Any other time, he's sure it would be insulting to feel Lex laughing against his skin, but the skin he's doing it to just happens to be at the very base of Clark's dick which makes it surprisingly difficult to care.

"Sure," Lex nods, nuzzling affectionately against Clark's cock when it flexes against his cheek. "You know what would work better?"

Conclusion: Lex is magic. That's the only explanation for how he's suddenly dragging the crinkly wrapper of a condom up the length of Clark's thigh, despite the fact that Clark *knows* there's never been a prophylactic within ten yards of this loft. Honestly, stranger things have happened in Smallville, most of them significantly less useful

than the ability to pluck safe sex supplies out of thin air.

“Lex, I don’t-” Loses all grasp of the English language about halfway through when Lex decides to crawl up the length of his body, dragging every available inch of himself against Clark’s dick on the way.

Lex smirks. “You don’t?”

“I mean, doesn’t that seem a little… fast?”

Slowly lowering himself down onto his elbows, Lex hovers with his lips just brushing Clark’s, still damp enough to cling in taunting little almost kisses when he says, “Sex is sex, Clark. You’ve already been in my mouth.”

The space between them disappears as if Lex feels compelled to offer some evidence. Tongue insinuating itself into Clark’s mouth with a faint tang that’s probably just his imagination but makes the tender heat in his groin pulse anyway.

“Here, I’ll show you.”

With a little tug - Clark has super strength, it really shouldn’t be this easy for Lex to move him however he wants - Lex pulls Clark’s hand to him, kissing at his fingertips before turning away to tear into another condom wrapper with his teeth. Or, no, not a condom, *lube* . Slippery, vaguely-sweet smelling lube that drizzles down the length of Clark’s fingers, one rivulet escaping over the knob of his wrist to patter his chest in shining polka dots.

Lex is definitely magic.

He sort of doubts that he’s actually gone numb everywhere but his hand, but he sure as heck can’t feel anything else as Lex urges it to curl around him, down. Even more down.

Clark’s touching Lex’s ass.

Like, not even just the cheeks or anything but. *Between* . Between where he’s so warm and the muscle is all crinkled and firm, like it knows he’s not supposed to be touching there. Good thing Lex doesn’t seem to know that because he’s arching back against Clark’s fingers and pressing at them with his own, making this throaty little sound that’s some kind of mutant hybrid of a whine and a hum. And, and Clark’s fingertip just sort of slips in without any permission from him and it’s…

Freaky. Tight, and hot, and very. Different. Not really much like a girl at all. An inane thing to think, because, duh, it's a whole different body part, of course it's not like a girl's… place. This is a guy's… place, and Clark is, like, several knuckles deeper into it than he was two seconds ago.

Lex's head is tipped back too far for Clark to see much of his expression, so he's got nothing to go on but the hope that he's doing this right. It's hard to focus when he keeps getting distracted by his finger sending "dude, you've gotta try this" notes flying across his brainpan to his dick. Lex is rocking his hips though, making it work when all Clark can manage to do his hold still and feel him up on the inside.

Inside.

God, part of his body's *inside* , Lex. That's trippy. Not to mention the truly spectacular things it's doing for the liquid want slopping around the pan of his hips, creeping tendrils of it spreading out through him like the polar opposite of swallowing a meteor rock; all viscous, inky pleasure.

Lex's hands plant themselves on his chest, big puppy paws that fan out and squeeze at him like there's a real breast there to fondle.

"Both," Lex says after a minute, like he just chugged a glass of gravel and really enjoyed it, head lolling forward to fix Clark with this searing, half-lidded look, and Clark doesn't even think about it before he presses his other slicked-up finger in right alongside the first.

Eyelashes fluttering, Lex chuffs a pretty, strained little cry and grabs at himself like his dick's a grenade and one vicious squeeze to his balls is the only thing keeping it from going off.

Oh.

" *Oh.* " Clark's positive he didn't mean to say that out loud, but whoa. This is the actual sexiest thing that has ever happened. To anyone. In all of time and space, nothing has ever been hotter than Lex Luthor having to stop himself from coming because of Clark's fingers inside him.

The word, "Fuck," shakes free of Lex in splinters, hand flying out blindly until he can manage to pry his eyelids up and look around. The condom gets snatched off the floor with the kind of intensity that normally sends mere mortals and Luthor Corp staff scampering for

cover - open, out, and rolled down over Clark's dick with a speed and efficiency that should probably count as a superpower.

"Out," he snaps, with one hard tap to the back of Clark's hand.

Fingers. Right. He bids a fond farewell to that slick, clutching pressure with one last little pet on the way out. Only no, he's not going to miss it at all, because he's going to be right back in there in a second *with his dick* . Holy crap.

Holy…

Ho…

"Oh," Clark says again, because he's the coolest, and also his brain has just evaporated in a puff of lilac smoke.

He's having sex. With Lex

Or possibly Lex is having sex with him, since Lex is the one up there straddling Clark's hips, sliding down onto his dick in these jerky, shuddery increments while Clark lays on the floor like a brain dead slug, but whatever.

Sex, it is being had.

"Look at me."

Clark's heartrate skyrockets like mercury in July, the hot-cold knife's edge sweep of adrenaline tingling along the underside of his skin at the sound of Lex's voice. The one he knows. The one that faces down the press, and Lex's father, and Earl Jenkins' gun; the one that's accused Clark of lying to him, promised to never hurt him, that's turned him inside out and upside down more times than he can remember and it's coming out of this face, this body, *now* , and Clark couldn't look away if the entire Smallville High football team barged up the stairs with Lana on their shoulders.

Faint trembles coast over the ball of Lex's shoulder, take root in the milk-pale stretch of his thighs as his body clenches around Clark. He's breathing like he just ran a mile at the speed usually reserved for his cars, splotchy pink patches coming up on his chest and neck, striped scarlet over the bridge of his nose. Still, he looks like a conqueror, an emperor on his throne. An assurance in his own power that none of Clark's abilities have ever been able to help him replicate.

“God, you must drive me crazy,” he says, husked out and skinned raw. His hand slides up Clark’s chest again, traces the lines of him like he’s memorizing by feel. “Built like a fucking statue, and the way you talk. The way you look at me.”

Clark’s not braced for it at all when Lex lifts himself up, the white hot core of him dragging smooth and sucking along the length of Clark’s dick. A dim wheeze of air bursts out of Clark’s lungs, more hitch-kicking him right in the chest just in time to get knocked loose all over again when Lex slides back down.

“I bet I think about you when I fuck other people.” The words sound drawn-thin, squeezing out in fits and starts as Lex sets up an ocean-steady rhythm that’s driving Clark wild. “I bet every time I’m getting off with somebody else I’ve got your pretty face in my head.”

Long fingers sink into Clark’s sweat-damp hair and it looks like a reach so Clark gets an arm behind him and leans up, into it. Lets Lex tug at messy curls like a leash, and oh look. Like this he can get a hand on Lex’s hip and help. Pull him into the downstroke and lift with the up, skin like satin under his palm.

“But now I get you, don’t I.” Question mark a totally foreign concept as he yanks Clark even closer. Makes him sit up and inhale the thick scent of them moving against each other. The sliver of air between them is muggy, saturated, like a thunderstorm on the horizon and Lex’s eyes are a perfect match. “Now I know exactly how sweet you sound for me. How you taste.”

Harder than the Porsche ever dreamed of, Lex’s mouth hits him, bright copper taste of blood smearing roof of his mouth as Lex licks in like he’s planning to take up permanent residence.

Doesn’t quite manage to stop kissing, stop fucking, stop anything long enough for, “I’m going to keep you,” to be anything but a gasp against Clark’s lips. “I’m going to make you all mine.”

Of course Lex would use sex as a weapon, of course he would, and he wields it deadlier than anybody who's ever come at Clark with a hunk of meteor. Another lifetime Clark might be bothered by that, might think about arguing, but clearly in another lifetime Clark would be an idiot, so screw that. Screw it right to the wall.

Clark’s arms are wrapped around Lex, both of them now, and he takes a second to consider that this probably isn’t a position a normal human could hold, but screw that too. Just really, because Lex is

moaning for Clark's hands gliding through the sheen of sweat on his back and rocking forward each time their hips meet to rub his hard cock against Clark's stomach, clinging trails better than a signature marking up Clark's skin.

Everywhere Clark touches Lex arches into it like a starved thing and he wonders if it's all the sex that Lex was apparently having at this point in his life that conditioned him like that or if it's something else. The Lex he knows sticks close, prowls and lingers, but he rarely ever touches people, at least that Clark's seen. Did he age out of it, or is this need still buried in him somewhere, shriveled and neglected in the shadow of the man Lex has decided to be?

All it does is make him want to give Lex more. Pet and stroke and love on him until he stills under Clark's hands, wrung out and accepting instead of pleading for more. Lex shouldn't ever have to plead for affection, he deserves it all. He does so much for everybody, Clark right at the top of the list, and never asks for anything back, not even kindness.

"Lex," he mumbles against the damp skin of Lex's shoulder, tasting salt. "Lex." Not even trying to say anything, just caught up in the loop of action and reaction. Chemistry. Lex would appreciate that. The feel of Lex all around him, the gallop of his heartbeat thudding in every inch of his body, pressing against the inside of his skin like he's grown too big to contain all of this sensation.

His hips flex up, slapping against Lex's as they come down and Lex gasps like he didn't that first day on the riverbank. Locks up like iron bands around Clark's shoulders and spreads wet heat all over Clark's stomach.

Blunt nails try to find a purchase on skin even a bullet can't touch, like Lex is trying to climb inside of him, like he needs to be closer when there's no closer to get. All the while panting, "Don't stop, don't stop."

So Clark doesn't. Lex is nearly dead weight in his arms, but that's hardly an obstacle. None at all when Clark rolls them over so Lex's back is - mostly - on the rug and his legs fall open like nothing so trivial as a hip joint is going to keep him from pulling Clark nearer.

It's probably not an impressive showing by most standards, and the less thought about *Lex's* standards the better, because Clark manages to thrust his way in maybe a dozen more times before he loses his

cotton-picking mind and, like, maybe a small portion of his soul to the electric rush of coming with Lex squeezed tight around him.

The next time he can think about, you know, anything whatsoever, Clark feels tingly. He's rocking that awesome, zen, sort of blank-slate feeling that he very occasionally manages when he jerks off, like his whole being is too satisfied to be bothered about anything else.

His head is resting against Lex's collar bone, gentle fingers combing the hair back from his face, unknotting the random snarls that inevitably turn up after a day of running around. The very tip of his dick is still clasped lightly inside of Lex, almost gross how it's marinating in the sludgy, thick heat of his own come trapped by the condom. Slightly gross. Also, a little sexy? And it's rapidly becoming imperative for Clark to pull out, because if he doesn't he's just going to get hard again. Always a delicate balance since everything kicked into gear downstairs - nobody ever talks about the downsides of having great stamina.

Carefully as he can, Clark slps free, glancing down to figure out what to do with the condom now and totally blindsided by the sight of Lex.

The satisfied sprawl of him, relaxed like Lex almost never is. Spread out and wide open, dick cradled soft and, yeah, pretty, Lex has a pretty cock and if anybody wants to say that's not macho they're going to have to go through Clark. Shiny-slick from hips to belly button because Clark got him off hard. By f… By *fucking* him. Really well, apparently.

Clark is good at sex.

The apocalypse can pretty much happen whenever it feels like it now, because life goals? Achieved.

Although Clark should possibly start paying better attention if the apocalypse isn't going to be happening immediately - then maybe Lex will stop doing stuff the second he least expects it. Like with the wrapping a hand around Clark's dick and making him moan out this shameful gut-punched noise with a long, firm stroke. Also pulling the condom off, but Clark feels like that probably could have been done less sensually, so he's just going to call it stroking.

Lex, expert condom dealer-wither that he is - that's not jealousy, no, that's just… heartburn - ties it up neatly and chucks a three-point shot directly into the trashcan under Clark's desk.

“Good aim.”

“I am a man of many talents,” Lex says smugly. His eyes take a leisurely stroll down Clark’s body, winding up, well… “Speaking of.”

Battling the urge to blush - he just had sex, good sex, there’s no reason to be embarrassed - he shrugs. Starts to plant his hands on his hips before deciding that might just encourage the optimistic half-chub he’s sporting.

“It just… kinda does that sometimes. You don’t ha-”

Lex’s strong fingers cut off anything else he might have said on the subject as surely as if they were curled around his throat.

Free hand on the back of Clark’s neck, Lex leads him to lay back down on top of him, braced up on his elbows so they can make out unhurriedly as Clark starts letting his hips move with Lex’s hand like they want to.

It’s less intense now, everything already revved so high that the want feels thicker, honeyed, resonating in Clark’s bones like a tuning fork struck at the perfect pitch. The smell of sex is heady, not really good, but satisfying, a little hind-brain zing that makes him want to do something stupid like suck a hickey onto Lex’s neck way up high where no shirt would cover it, or, like, take out an add in the school paper to announce that he’s dating Lex Luthor.

Which he’s not, obviously. But, like, it sounds good. *Make you all mine* sort of good. That rough little bump on Lex’s thumb that catches *just so* sort of good.

“I suppose technically this is still a felony,” Lex murmurs, so much like a sweet nothing Clark doesn’t even catch it until he adds, “16 and 22.”

There should be some sort of grinding noise to go along with how fast Clark’s body locks up. If Lex minds, he doesn’t show it. Hand still steadily working over Clark’s dick - which is so not helping with his level of attentive focus right now - the other one busy twirling random locks of Clark’s hair.

“In addition to my keys, I also had my wallet on me,” he clarifies serenely. Well, that explains the condom, at least. “I’ve owned some high quality fakes, but the picture…” He breaks off to lay a line of shallow kisses down Clark’s cheekbone. “Also, all of your homework is

dated 2002, which is fascinating. I survived the millennium, who would have thought?"

"Lex." There's Clark's middle school voice again, back from the grave. "I can explain."

A thoughtful noise from the back of Lex's throat gets buried against the soft underside of Clark's jaw.

"That would certainly be interesting," he says, nibbling a little when Clark doesn't do anything but lay there and try not to have a heart attack. He doesn't even think he's anatomically capable of having a heart attack, but if anyone could make him break the laws of physics like that, it'd be Lex. "Do you have thoughts on bareback? Because my bill of health has never been less than spotless and if you've only been with me…"

Switching over to an underhand grip, Lex's fingers spread to cradle Clark's balls, hefting the weight of them like he's testing melons at the grocery store.

Not that Clark imagines Lex would know how to pick out melons. Or has ever been to a grocery store. Might own a few, who knows, Les is always talking about the value of a diversified portfolio.

So not the point.

"Don't you think we should…" There is so much spit in Clark's mouth, just an absolute world of spit because for some reason his body has decided now is the time to get literal about that whole mouth-watering thing. It might help if Lex would stop jacking him off but he's honestly not sure how much. There's no part of him that was in any way prepared for… well, any of today.

"Talk about this?" he finishes lamely.

Lex's sigh has no right to sound that put-upon, Clark is not the one being difficult here.

"I *asked* for your thoughts. If you're hung up on it, we can go for intercrural. I think I'd enjoy your come dripping out of me, though." Fancy little twist maneuver right at the head that sends Clark's eyes for a scenic tour of the back in his head.

Quieter, almost secret, "I've never let anybody do that before."

Clark is such a bad person. Low-down, no good, terrible person, and he's going to have *sex* . With *Lex* . *Again* . Instead of having the reasonable adult conversation they really ought to be having.

He's… kind of more okay with that than he would have guessed.

***

Why does morning always show up at the least convenient moment?

Clark stretches out, pushing until his muscles shake with the sweet pull of just enough before relaxing back again. Lex's chest is warm under his head, heartbeat steady in his ear. This is developing into the kind of trend Clark can really get behind.

The is sunrise just getting high enough to shine through the window on the other side of the barn, dip-dyeing everything butter-gold and amber, angles sanded soft. Edging toward cool, but not bad, just enough that being wrapped around somebody, skin-to-skin, feels a special kind of indulgent.

Lex's hand lifts gently from the over the side of sofa, tips, sending a fairy-light from the face of his watch careening across the ceiling. Clark wants to reach out and pull it down, tell him it's not time to get up yet. He'll still have chores to do later, but Mom and Dad won't be back until tonight, so there's plenty of time to get it all done. Especially if he can keep Lex distracted for a couple of hours and speed through them.

"Good morning, Clark," Lex says, deep with sleep. That's going to be an awkward turn-on to have once Lex is old enough to use that voice all the time, except…

Except the arm that Lex lays back down is thicker than it's supposed to be.

Not than it's supposed to be. Than it was.

The stomach Clark's hand is resting on isn't the concave curve of a body shooting up too fast to keep time with his weight, and letting his eyes roam further down, those thighs are way more muscular than they were when Clark had them wrapped tight around his waist.

Would probably still look good in a miniskirt, though.

Crap.

“Lex!” Clark jolts up, more awake than he’s been in his entire life in the span of 1.2 seconds. “I-”

“Can explain?” Lex looks up at him from the drab couch cushions, head pillowed on one arm. Leaving it up to one eyebrow to say exactly what he thinks of Clark’s odds of explaining one freaking thing. “I’ve heard that somewhere before.”

Now that Clark’s not draped over him like an orgasm-doped blanket, Lex sits up, rolling his head from one side to the other until Clark hears a faint pop.

“For the record, even 16 is too old to be sleeping up here,” he says, hoisting himself with a subdued groan.

There’s a flaky white patch high up on the inside of his thigh that Clark is in no way staring at, because it is a reminder of what a bad person he is and how he shouldn’t have had sex with Lex when he wasn’t entirely himself and also it’s not hot at all.

Except for how it it is.

It’s really hot.

His come is still on Lex’s skin because his come was *inside* of Lex and Clark is going directly to hell, do not pass go, do not collect $200.

“If you’d like the name of a competent attorney, I can give you a recommendation,” Lex is saying as he snags his pants from where they got shoved into a corner with a small family of dust bunnies. He flicks at an errant bit of fluff with his fingernail, but between the explosion and… well, other things, clean is probably a lost cause. “I was wrong about the felony - shockingly I wasn’t well-versed in Kansas’ age of consent when I was sixteen -- but the sodomy law still stands.”

Unless Clark’s imagining it, there’s a slight hitch in his movement as he steps into the slacks. A strange detail to focus on since he thinks Lex is talking about suing him, but what are you gonna do? It’s not like he hasn’t earned it if Lex decides to take him for everything he own.

Which is nothing.

Oh God, Lex is going to go after his parents. Mom and Dad are going to know he had sex. With Lex. Under extremely questionable circumstances. They totally raised him better than this, and Dad is going to yell, and Mom will cry, and they're going to lose the farm because Clark can't keep it in his pants.

"Admittedly the circumstances would be difficult to explain in court." Lex is still talking, possibly to torture Clark. Again, he's earned it, but he's also starting to feel like he's having an out of body experience. "Still, I think it's safe to say you could count on a tidy settlement if you wish to press charges."

Wait, what?

Lex is talking about… Lex is offering to help Clark *sue him* .

And to think, yesterday was almost the weirdest day of the week.

"No! I would nev- I mean, if anybody should be having somebody arrested, it's you! I…" *Come on, Clark. Just swallow past the lump in your throat and say it. If you're grown up enough to do it, you're grown up enough to take responsibility for your actions.* "I took advantage."

Lex is doing that thing where he jams several doctoral theses into the span of, like, three blinks and a lip twitch.

"Clark, let me assure you that, adolescent decision making aside - and we need to have a discussion about your criteria for going bareback - I defined the words enthusiastic consent last night."

You know what would be great? If Lex weren't the only one wearing pants for this discussion. Also if Clark had a single ever-loving clue what was going on, but the pants seem like a more doable solution. Where the heck are his jeans?

"You didn't know me."

"I do now."

Oh.

Ouch.

Okay, he hadn't really thought… Of course it's not like… Lex dates hot people. Hot people who can drink, and smoke, and apply for home loans. Not that anyone Lex would ever date would need a home loan

but. Yeah, no. The fact that Lex as a teenager wanted to sleep with Clark doesn't mean that real-time Lex, with options, would want him. Heck, Clark goes to school with a couple hundred people his own age and even they don't want him. Obviously… Clearly...

Under the sofa cushion is where Clark's jeans are. He really doesn't remember how that happened, but he's grateful nonetheless. Thanks, x-ray vision.

It also allows him to use the opportunity of excavating his pants to avoid looking at Lex while asking, "Meaning you've changed your mind?"

Yeah, that came out sounding just as pathetic as he thought it might. Just what he needed to cap off his first for-really-reals time. At least now he doesn't have to worry about asking if Lex still respects him.

By the time he looks back up from doing up his fly, Lex is already tucking in his shirt. Nobody who sees him is going to make any inaccurate guesses about what he was up to last night, but all things considered, Clark can appreciate the value of wool and cotton as armor.

"Meaning I recognize the difference between sleeping with a sexually aggressive peer and an older divorcee with a checkered history." For the third time since Clark started watching, Lex checks that his cuffs are buttoned, almost like he's… He couldn't be… "It's a smart choice, Clark, I support it."

Holy crap, Lex is nervous. Not in the obvious way like Clark gets, but for somebody who knows him. For somebody who knows that sometimes Lex forces himself to make declarative statements just to convince himself they're true.

"Funny," Clark hears himself say, and yes, definitely out of body experience. It's this bizarre, Picasso surrealist moment where he's totally channeling Lex, while Lex is busy employing Clark's default 'walk away from the conversation' technique. It works a lot better when you can run faster than the human eye can see. "I don't remember making one."

Yanked up short on nothing but Clark's voice, Lex halts at the top of the stairs. His hand reaches out for the bannister, casual besides how his knuckles show white through the skin.

"It wouldn't work, Clark," he tells the barn wall authoritatively. So

many obvious tells, guarded and too out of control not to show it. Is this how Lex walks around feeling all the time, being able to pick apart the seams of what people want to show and rifle around in what they're really hiding? No wonder he comes off so self-important all the time. "Setting aside the legal issues, and the fact that your father would use my body to fertilize the back forty, the people I date are subject to a certain amount of scrutiny that I imagine you'd prefer to avoid."

Lex said date.

Not sleep with, not booty call, not have a one night stand with and never speak to again.

Also a whole bunch of other stuff that was important too, but. *Date.*

All at once he needs Lex to look at him. Needs it like air, or food, or who knows what because there's every chance that Clark might be able to live without all of those things. Clark's body is stronger than he's ever been brave enough to test, and Lex might just be the only person around who's strong enough to hold up against it.

After all, what's an unstoppable force without an immovable object?

"And?" he makes himself say. The first breath-stealing step in front of a bullet.

Lex's face has got nothing at all to do with apathy. Like somebody who has to down a cyanide caplet. Like a drowning man holding himself under.

"And there are things that I can abide in a friendship that I wouldn't tolerate in a more... intimate relationship. Not between us." His voice is almost cold enough, almost with enough snear to say he doesn't care. Almost. "Finding someone to lie to me is easy, especially in bed."

Clark's saved him from drowning once already.

"Lex, do you want me?"

The sun is high enough now to mold blinding-bright to the curve of Lex's skull, a glinting halo, or a crown. Clark wonders if it's always an either or proposition, or if that's just how Lex is built to see it.

"Want has never been in question."

Lex tosses it off as nothing, as if there's no pattern to how people who voice those simmering rumors about him and Clark tend to lose business, wind up in trouble with the bank. As if he's never denied it outright to Mr. Luthor's face, but Clark isn't supposed to have picked up on that. Some days, he thinks Lex really believes Clark's that naive.

"Are you obsessed with me?"

Lex clenches his free hand like he's looking for a water bottle to play with. Or maybe a weapon to throw.

"I prefer to think of it as a reasonable and proportional interest."

There's something about this that feels like it should be happening at night. If Clark had ever thought to imagine it at all, he'd have pictured it at night. Accusations and admissions slipping out where the world of other people's expectations couldn't touch them. Probably at Lex's place, because that always seems to be the locale of their most dramatic showdowns; the fire and the stonework, shining tools of war adding a certain gothic ambience that would feel appropriate.

Yet here he is, shirtless at dawn, in the loft where he's spent some of the finest hours of his life fantasizing about holding Lana's hand, and he's asking Lex Luthor, of all people...

"Do you love me?"

A normal person would never be able to hear the way Lex's breath stutters. How his heart ramps up inside of his chest, and Clark can empathise there, because his is about to spit right out the front of his chest and flop around on the floor at Lex's feet.

Then again, it sort of feels like it's doing that anyway.

Lex bites down on nothing, licks his lips. Says, "Does it make a difference?"

And that, at least, is one question Clark is absolutely certain of the answer to.

"Yes."

Sharp turn and Lex glares out the window instead of meeting Clark's eyes.

Down on the main road an early-morning car crawls by, a tiny glint of silver making its way toward the horizon.

“I’d think that was obvious,” Lex shrugs.

Clark takes a deep breath and forces himself not to think about how easy or satisfying it might be to strangle Lex.

“Say it anyway.”

If Lex had Clark’s abilities, that bannister would be toast. As it is, he thinks he can hear Lex’s bones creaking from how hard he’s gripping it. Could be that’s just Lex’s molars grinding together.

“Yes. Alright? Yes.” He doesn’t shout, Lex hardly ever shouts, but what he ends up with instead sounds jagged, like it had to be torn out of his throat and took pieces with it on the way. “What do you want from me, Clark?”

And isn’t that just the million dollar question. Although with Lex it might be more like billion.

Clark’s not shaking as he pads, barefoot, across the empty stretch of space separating them. That feels wrong too, somehow, but he’s… not calm. At all. But it’s maybe a good sort of terrified. All things considered, he owes Lex at least that much.

Lex flinches when Clark stops in front of him, then catches himself and visibly stands his ground.

“What you said about… the thing to explore later?” In some deep, oft-ignored recesses of his brain, Clark had been clinging to the hope that losing his virginity would make him less of a wuss about saying... stuff. “It would take a lot of exploring.”

He can practically feel the prickle of blood rushing back into Lex’s fingertips as they ease off the bannister, though Clark’s not sure whether that was on purpose or not.

“You don’t feel pain?” Lex asks, warily.

Which, okay, fair. Clark has sort of played Lucy to Lex’s Charlie Brown on the “admitting anything ever” front.

“I do,” Clark nods, smashing right through every principal he was raised on and keeps right on going. “Just. Not like other people. It… It

takes a lot... to hurt me."

Doesn't throw anything prosaic about how Lex could totally do it, because he thinks he's being pretty clear here, and also how not entirely metaphorical that might be if Lex takes this wrong.

Lex is sort of swaying toward him, though, in a way that suggests he doesn't realize he's doing it, so Clark doesn't think he's taking this wrong. And that could get addictive quickly. Nobody's ever wanted Clark the way Lex seems to want him as a matter of course.

"Like getting hit by a car?"

Because he can, Clark takes the last short step to put him right up against Lex and tries not to do anything like raise his arms up in victory when Lex just kind of folds against him like he was built to fit that way.

"More than that," Clark concedes, and then he can't say anything at all because Lex's mouth has claimed this land in the name of etc., and Clark?

He's got no problem with that.

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